



# Preschoolers' Learning at Home: Reports from Parents in the United States, Bulgaria, Israel, and Spain



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## Introduction

This study explores parental beliefs about supporting preschool children's reading and mathematics development and how it varies across four countries: the United States, Bulgaria, Israel, and Spain.

We focus on:

- What information parents want to receive from their children's teachers
- Time spent in the home on reading & mathematics
- Parental confidence

We compare these four countries because:

- All 4 countries fall below East Asian countries on international assessments (PISA and TIMMS) in reading and mathematics
- All 4 countries are considered to be industrialized nations with access to technology
- Each country's governments provides educational funding

## Method

### Participants

| Country       | N   | M <sub>parent age</sub> (SD) | M <sub>child age</sub> (SD) |
|---------------|-----|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bulgaria      | 103 | NA                           | NA                          |
| Israel        | 167 | 38.15 (4.75)                 | 5.25 (0.74)                 |
| Spain         | 138 | 40.10 (5.25)                 | 5.48 (0.74)                 |
| United States | 183 | 36.87 (4.46)                 | 4.98 (0.85)                 |

- Respondents were typically mothers (73%) & college educated (53%+)

## Method continued

### Measures

- Participants responded to 38 questions regarding their behaviors and attitudes towards home learning for their children's mathematics and reading development.

## Results

### What parents want to receive from their children's teacher regarding their reading & mathematics activities (top 2 choices)

| Country       | Reading                                            |      | Mathematics                                     |      |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------|------|-------------------------------------------------|------|
|               | Activity                                           | %    | Activity                                        | %    |
| Bulgaria      | Links to informational websites about reading      | 27.1 | Recommendations for apps, websites, video games | 28.6 |
|               | Reading worksheets and homework                    | 27.1 | Math worksheets and homework                    | 23.1 |
| Israel        | Informational newsletters or pamphlets             | 51.7 | Books                                           | 60.0 |
|               | Recommendations for apps, websites, or video games | 45.5 | Toys or games about mathematics                 | 39.8 |
| Spain         | Music or songs                                     | 34.4 | Recommendations for apps, websites, video games | 38.1 |
|               | Books                                              | 27.7 | Toys or games about mathematics                 | 31.8 |
| United States | Toys or games about reading                        | 29.4 | Informational newsletter or pamphlets           | 42.2 |
|               | Recommendations for apps, websites, or video games | 25.0 | Recommendations for apps, websites, video games | 33.3 |

### Weekly engagement in mathematics & reading - minutes per week

| Country       | Reading         |       | Mathematics     |    |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|----|
|               | Mean (SD)       | p     | Mean (SD)       | p  |
| Bulgaria      | 102.64 (107.98) | <.001 | 110.93 (123.85) | NS |
| Israel        | 103.93 (157.96) | <.001 | 112.29 (297.90) | NS |
| Spain         | 129.63 (141.96) | .001  | 62.50 (73.73)   | NS |
| United States | 188.30 (129.64) |       | 88.05 (145.54)  |    |

## Results contd.

### Parents' confidence in assisting with mathematics and reading

| Country       | Reading     |       | Mathematics |      |
|---------------|-------------|-------|-------------|------|
|               | Mean (SD)   | P     | Mean (SD)   | P    |
| Israel        | 3.17 (1.33) | <.001 | 3.25 (1.20) | .007 |
| Spain         | 3.34 (1.23) | <.001 | 3.39 (1.18) | .048 |
| United States | 3.90 (1.11) |       | 3.63 (1.21) |      |

## Discussion

Amount of Time Spent Engaged in Reading and Mathematics

- U.S. & Spanish children spend significantly more time on reading than mathematics, while Bulgarian & Israeli children spend equal time on each

Confidence in Supporting Reading and Mathematics Learning in the Home

- In general, U.S. parents report higher levels of confidence in supporting their children's reading and mathematics learning. However, overall, only about a third of parents report only moderate confidence levels in supporting their children's reading (38%) and mathematics (36%) learning

## Contact Information

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